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Letter dated 14 February 2003 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the comparisons drawn by Security Council members between the successful disarmament process in South Africa and the current efforts under way in Iraq and to present the Council with a South African Government initiative to assist in this process.

Following a visit this week to Iraq by a special envoy of President Thabo Mbeki, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, I wish to inform the Council that Iraq has accepted South Africa's offer to send to Iraq the experts who led the successful South African programme to destroy nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as the missiles for the delivery of these weapons in conditions of combat. The South African team of Government representatives, scientists, engineers and technicians will share with the people of Iraq our experience in disarmament and in how to eradicate weapons of mass destruction, under international supervision. The South African Government has also given Iraq copies of our own legislation dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

I am pleased to attach an excerpt from the announcement made by President Mbeki during his State of the Nation address, delivered in Cape Town this morning (see annex), and I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dumisani S. **Kumalo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 14 February 2003 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Excerpt from the State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki: Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, 14 February 2003

As we speak, a number of our citizens are preparing to travel to Iraq. These are the experts who led our country's programme to destroy our nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, as well as the missiles for the delivery of these weapons in conditions of combat. The work they did has now resulted in the South African example of disarmament being recognized internationally as an example of best international practice.

Recently, we proposed to the Government of Iraq and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, that this team should visit Iraq to share with the Government, scientists, engineers, technicians and people of Iraq our experience relevant to the mission of the United Nations and Iraq to eradicate weapons of mass destruction, under international supervision.

I am pleased to inform the honourable Members that Iraq has accepted our offer, which we have already discussed with the leadership of the weapons inspectors. We trust that this intervention will help to ensure the necessary proper cooperation between the United Nations inspectors and Iraq, so that the issue of weapons of mass destruction is addressed satisfactorily, without resort to war.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Government of Iraq for its positive response to our suggestion, as well as the recent decisions it has taken to allow the U-2 and other aerial surveillance flights, to encourage its citizens to be interviewed at any location decided by the inspectors without any Iraqi officials present, and to adopt legislation prohibiting the production of weapons of mass destruction.

To assist with regard to this last matter, we have given Iraq copies of our own legislation dealing with weapons of mass destruction, the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Act of 1993, and notices and regulations published in terms of the Act in the period between 1997 and 2002.

We have done all this because we prefer peace to war. We have taken the positions we have not to oppose or support any country, nor to seek any glory. We have done what we have because, as South Africans and Africans, we know the pain of war and the immeasurable value of peace. During the last century, South Africans lost their lives in the titanic battles of the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War.